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WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT ORDERS INVESTIGATION OF LEAK OF LEBANON RECOMMENDATIONS  
BY JAMES GERSTENZANG

President Reagan has ordered the Justice Department to investigate the disclosure of recommendations made in a National Security Council meeting two months ago that the United States begin shelling Moslem positions in Lebanon, a government source said Tuesday night.

One source suggested that the president's special Mideast envoy believed the leak put his life in danger.

Officials at the White House and the Justice Department refused to comment and would not say whether such an investigation was taking place. "We don't comment on investigations," said Justice Department spokesman Tom DeCair.

The source, who spoke on condition that he not be further identified, said the fact that an investigation was under way was considered to be classified information. Other officials at several levels of government who normally are helpful on sensitive questions were unusually reluctant to discuss the question Tuesday night.

This source said the FBI had been questioning White House and foreign policy officials since shortly after the information from the National Security Council meeting was published in newspapers.

Another source, also insisting on anonymity, said stories appeared involving a meeting of the National Security Council during the weekend of Sept. 10-11 at which recommendations made by Robert C. McFarlane were considered.

McFarlane, then the president's special envoy to the Middle East and now his national security adviser, was said to have recommended increasing the U.S. military profile in Lebanon in the wake of attacks that had killed several members of the U.S. Marine contingent of the multi-national peacekeeping force.

This was six weeks before a suicide bomb attack killed 239 Marines in their Beirut headquarters.

According to this source, McFarlane had asked that U.S. artillery on shore and naval guns be allowed to shell militia positions of the Druse Moslem sect suspected of firing on the Marines.

McFarlane was in the Middle East at the time.

Shortly after his recommendations were made public, he was said to have complained that the disclosure of them endangered his life by clearly identifying him as the official responsible for any stepped-up U.S. military activity.

The source said disclosure of the council discussion was raised in White House staff meetings shortly after it appeared and prompted immediate concern.

The government source said the investigation began soon afterward.

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